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State Department review completed

SECRET

January 16, 1966

Dear Red:

Secretary McNamara and I have been giving urgent consideration to the alternatives we will confront if we continue to get no response, or get a clearly negative response, to present diplomatic efforts. To assist us in this consideration, and for the use of the President, we would like your assessment, using ONE only, of two basic possible cases:

I. Resumption of the Bombing

II. Deferral of Resumption

Case I would involve three hypothetical choices:

A. Resumption on the previous targeting pattern only, with road and rail lines in the northwest and northeast hit up to defined limits from the Chinese border, with no strikes within the Hanoi and Haiphong perimeters.

B. The same plus strikes on major military targets, notably POL and electric power installations, within the Hanoi and Haiphong perimeters, where this can be done without major civilian casualties.

C. As in A and B, plus mining of Haiphong harbor and the two lesser ports to the north.

For all three cases, it should be assumed that SAM sites would be struck as necessary to carry out the program without unacceptable

The Honorable

William F. Raborn, Jr.,

Director of Central Intelligence.

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losses, and that airfields would be struck if, but only if, hostile air action became a significant impediment to the carrying out of the program.

The basic question would be the reaction of the Communist powers and of important non-Communist nations to such programs. However, we believe you are also in a position to give some assessment of the military effect of these programs on the North Vietnamese military effort in the south, and this should be included.

Case II speaks for itself and involves the same questions, including of course the question whether non-resumption would permit significantly greater DRV military action directed against the South.

I leave it to you whether the two Cases should be covered in the same paper. Since both assessments appear to depend on an initial evaluation of the basic positions of Hanoi, Peking, and Moscow, and the attitudes in non-Communist countries, as these factors have now evolved during the pause, it might be best to combine the two cases into a single paper which would have such an over-all assessment as its opening section.

All materials in the Department and in the Department of Defense will be available to ONE and to you for this operation, and Mr. Bundy specifically has the total PINTA file for your use.

We have no particular length specification in mind. If the text becomes long, a summary might later be written. We do ask that the effort be intensive, with a view to a paper in our hands not later than Thursday morning, January 20th.

Sincerely,

George W. Ball  
Acting Secretary

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